

**Kentucky Commission for Community Volunteerism and Service
Review Process and Selection Criteria for 2014-2015 AmeriCorps Programs**

Applicant Name/Organization: _____

Program Name: _____

NEW APPLICANT ☐

RECOMPETE APPLICANT ☐

| | | | possible | reviewer |
|--|------------------------|--|-----------|----------|
| 1. Executive Summary | 0 | | 0 | |
| 2. Rationale & Approach // Program Design | 50% (50 points) | | | |
| | | Problem/Need | 9 | |
| | | Logic Model Worksheet | 12 | |
| | | Measurable Community Impact | 5 | |
| | | Evidence Base | 8 | |
| | | Member Training | 8 | |
| | | Member Supervision | 8 | |
| | | Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification | 0 | |
| | | TOTAL SECTION 2. | 50 | |
| 3. Organizational Capacity | 25% (25 points) | | 25 | |
| 4. Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy | 25% (25 points) | | 25 | |
| TOTAL SCORE: | | | | |

Do you recommend this application be sent forward to the Corporation for National and Community Service to be considered for possible AmeriCorps funding? ☐Yes ☐No

Reviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Executive Summary: -0- Points

The applicant will fill in the blanks in the following template to complete the executive summary:

The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [what the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will be]. At the end of the 1st program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] that will be engaged in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing.] This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of [Focus Area(s)]. The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

Fixed-amount grant applicants should list their leveraged resources as they are not required to match.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design - 50 points total

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community needs.

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| a. Problem/Need | 0 | 4.5 | 9 | |

The applicant describes the community needs the AmeriCorps members will be addressing .

The narrative provides documentation of the extent/severity of the need in the target community (ies) where the members will serve.

The applicant cites specific relevant data such as the unemployment rates and poverty rate for the community served.

In addition to the above information, *Tier 1 applicants* provided the following information:

- Involvement of eligible school(s) and LEA (local educational agencies) leadership in identifying need;
- Need(s) identified by eligible partner school(s) and LEA leadership that the AmeriCorps members will be addressing; and
- The extent/severity of the need in the school(s) where the proposed AmeriCorps members will serve and cited specific relevant data.

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Selection Criteria | | | | |
| b. •AmeriCorps members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems •Evidence-Base •Measurable Community Impact | | | | |

This section consists of three components:

- ▶ LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET/THEORY OF CHANGE: 12 points
- ▶ MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: 5 points
- ▶ EVIDENCE BASE: 8 points

The total score for the above three components = 25 points.

We have split these three components out separately to enable us to see where an applicant is strong or weak.

Applicants will be awarded up to **17 points** for providing a detailed theory of change (logic model) using the Logic Model Worksheet (see attachment to grant application). *A theory of change is a description of how and why a set of activities are expected to lead to early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes over a specified period. A logic model is a graphical representation of program activities and their intended outcomes as depicted in the theory of change.*

**KCCVS has allotted 12 points for the Logic Model Worksheet +
5 points for the Measurable Impact narrative questions +
8 points for Evidence Base**

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| ▶ LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET | 0 | 6 | 12 | |

▶ LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET- 12 POINTS

Points will be awarded based on quality and completeness of the logic model.

The logic model (worksheet) shall depict:

- Number of locations or sites in which members are providing services
- Number of AmeriCorps members that will be delivering the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will be implementing or delivering
- The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention)
- The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week)
- The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level)

Reviewer Comments:

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| ► MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT | 0 | 2.5 | 5 | |

- The narrative describes how the intervention is designed to address the problem described in the Problem/Need section above.

For *Tier 1 Education* the applicant also provided the following to supplement the logic model:

- The applicant explains how the potential contribution of AmeriCorps members addresses the needs identified by eligible school and LEA leadership.
- Applicants that propose to serve multiple school sites explains how they will coordinate turnaround efforts among those sites and take advantage of the scale of the project (e.g., through economies of scale).
- Explains the extent to which the project addresses multiple student needs and is aligned with comprehensive school turnaround plans, including the extent to which the proposed project incorporates at least one, or preferably more than one, of the following:
 - Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.
 - Establishing a school culture and environment that improves school safety, attendance, and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs.
 - Accelerating students' acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills.
 - Increasing graduation rates through strategies such as early warning systems, credit-recovery programs and re-engagement strategies.
 - Increasing college enrollment rates through college preparation counseling assistance to include completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college applications, and educating students and their families on financial literacy for college.
 - Supporting school implementation of increased learning time.

Applicants that selected Tier 1 or Tier 2: Unless otherwise stated CNCS' expectation is that at least 30 percent of the requested MSYs are in the identified performance measures. If that is not the case, the applicant explains in the narrative why it was not possible to meet the 30% threshold. Based on reviewers' assessment, an applicant may or may not remain in Tier 1 or 2.

Tier 1 Education applicants are encouraged to apply for a minimum of 20 MSYs.

VetSuccess AmeriCorps (Tier 1 Veterans and Military Family) applicants should have only full time members placed in two-member teams. Applicants that apply for less than full time members will not be as competitive as those with only full time members.

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| ► EVIDENCE BASE | 0 | 4 | 8 | |

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change. In this section, applicants shall provide a description of the studies and evaluations conducted that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge. This section must include specific citations of studies and/or publicly available evaluation and research reports.

National Reviewers will score the evidence presented by applicants using of the four tiered evidence levels described below:

- **Pre-preliminary evidence** (applicants awarded 1 point) means the applicant presents evidence that it has collected quantitative or qualitative data from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries that have been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants following their service year.
- **Preliminary evidence** (applicants awarded 2 points) means the applicant presents an initial evidence base that can support conclusions about the program's contribution to observed outcomes. The evidence base consists of at least 1 non-experimental study conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention). A study that demonstrates improvement in program participants over time on one or more intended outcomes OR an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track program participants through a service pipeline and measure participants' responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether participants have improved on an intended outcome.
- **Moderate evidence** (applicants awarded 4 points) means the applicant presents a reasonably developed evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with moderate confidence. The evidence base consists of 1 or more quasi-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention) with positive findings on one or more intended outcome OR 2 or more non-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcome OR 1 or more experimental studies of another relevant program that uses a similar intervention. Examples of research that meet the standards include: well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).
- **Strong evidence** (applicants awarded 8 points) means the applicant presents an evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with the highest level of confidence. This consists of 1 or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcome. For all studies presented by applicants to meet the four tiered evidence levels above, reviewers will examine: a) how closely the program model evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant; b) the methodological quality of the studies presented (e.g., statistical power, internal and/or external validity, sample size, etc.); c) the recency of the studies, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years; d) strength of the findings, with more weight given to findings that show a large and persistent positive effect on participants.

Reviewer Comments:

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| MEMBER TRAINING | 0 | 4 | 8 | |

The narrative describes anticipated training topics and the timeline for member training.

The narrative describes how and when the program will ensure that members and generated volunteers are aware of and adhering to the rules regarding prohibited activities.

In addition to the above, *Tier 1 Education* applicants have provided the following information:
 -How they will coordinate the training of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff?
 -Explains their plans for providing members with opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned to promote effectiveness of interventions and encourage AmeriCorps members’ sustained participation in the ongoing efforts to turn around the nation’s lowest-performing schools.

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| MEMBER SUPERVISION | 0 | 4 | 8 | |

The narrative describes the program’s plan for supervising members, and how this plan ensures that members will receive adequate support and guidance throughout their terms.

In addition to the above, *Tier 1 Education* applicants must provide the following information:
 How they will coordinate the supervision of AmeriCorps members with school leadership and staff?

VetSuccess AmeriCorps (Tier 1 Veterans and Military Family) applicants: While VSOC Counselors will provide guidance and support to members, the program is responsible for providing member supervision.

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------|
| COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

The narrative explains how the program participants will know they are AmeriCorps members.

The narrative explains how the communities in which the participants serve will know they are AmeriCorps members.

The narrative explains how the program will ensure that its participants will wear the AmeriCorps logo daily.

The narrative explains how the program will ensure that the participants are prepared to speak about their AmeriCorps experience to members of the community.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK:

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY – 25 points total

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---|--|--|---|-------------|
| ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING <i>Recompeting programs and/or previously funded</i> | 0 | 3.5 | 7 | |
| OR | | | | |
| ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING <i>New applicants</i> | 0 | 5 | 10 | |

The narrative describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.

The narrative describes the organization's prior experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal funds.

- Review copy of organizational chart. Does the organization appear solid?
- Review copies of letters of community support and commitment to the program from the applicant's most significant community partners. *Please note the letters should include what the partners see as the benefit to the community by the AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.* Do the letters of support/commitment respond adequately to the requirements?

Tier 1 Education applicants: Instead of submitting letters from the applicant's most significant community partners, submit a Letter or Letters of Commitment from all eligible partner schools and their corresponding LEAs, including evidence of the applicants' consultation with school and LEA leadership.

Reviewer's Comments:

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------|
| COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY <i>Recompeting (current) programs and/or previously funded</i> | 0 | 5.5 | 11 | |
| OR | | | | |
| COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY <i>New applicants</i> | 0 | 7.5 | 15 | |

The narrative describes how the organization/program will insure compliance with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited activities at service site locations.

The narrative describes how the organization/program will prevent and detect compliance issues.

The narrative explains how the organization/program will hold itself and all service sites accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees only (recompeting applicants and formula grantees) | 0 | 3.5 | 7 | |

The narrative describes the applicant's performance against performance measure targets during its last three years of program operation.

The narrative states how successful the applicant has been in solving the identified problem.

If the applicant did not meet performance targets, the narrative provides an explanation and describes its plan for improvement.

The narrative describes any compliance issues and areas of weakness/risk identified during the last full year of program operation at the organization, and/or service sites. If the program or service sites had compliance or areas of weakness/risk identified, an explanation is provided and the corrective action taken are described as well as the plan for improvement.

Enrollment:

If the program enrolled less than 100% of the slots received during its last full year of program operation, an explanation, and a plan for improvement is provided. *Enrollment rate is calculated as slots filled plus refill slots filled divided by slots awarded.*

Retention:

If the program was unable to retain all of its members during the last full year of program operation, an explanation and plan for improvement is included. While retention rates may vary among equally effective programs depending on the program model, grantees are expected to pursue the highest retention rate possible. *Retention rate is calculated as the number of members exited with award (full or partial award) divided by the number of members enrolled.*

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

The narrative describes the plans for soliciting timely and regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders to inform continuous improvement efforts.

The narrative describes the plans for using data to inform continuous improvement.

Tier 1 Education applicants. In addition to the information above, describe the plans for soliciting timely and regular feedback from internal and external stakeholders, including school and LEA staff, students, and families, to inform continuous improvement efforts. Describe the plans for using data on student academic performance, academic engagement, and/or behavioral outcomes to inform continuous improvement.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

COST EFFECTIVENESS and BUDGET ADEQUACY -25 points total

**Please determine the time of application which is being scored prior to proceeding with Cost Effectiveness:
*Cost-reimbursement, Fixed or Education Award Program***

Applications that are Cost-Reimbursement grants: (\$13,300/MSY maximum)

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| COST EFFECTIVENESS | 0 | 6.5 | 13 | |

The narrative explains how the budget is a cost effective approach for addressing the community need(s) identified in the application.
The narrative should consider the total cost and benefits of the program, and to the extent possible, documents the cost effectiveness.

The narrative compares the cost effectiveness of the program with the cost and benefits of alternative models or approaches (if available) and demonstrates how this program model is most cost effective.

***Programs will be evaluated upon their ability to maximize their return on investment; applicants with a program design that achieves equal results at a lower cost will be an advantage over programs that achieve similar results at a higher cost.*

Tier 1 Education applicants: in addition to the information above, provide a description of how the resources requested will supplement, and not supplant, SIG funding or other existing school funding streams.

**Applications that are Education Award Programs (\$800/MSY);
or Fixed grant amounts (\$13,000/MSY maximum).**

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------|
| COST EFFECTIVENESS | 0 | 6.5 | 13 | |

The narrative discusses how the applicant will raise the additional resources it will need to manage and operate an AmeriCorps program beyond the fixed amount.

The narrative identifies the total amount budgeted to operate the program inclusive of the grant award from CNCS and the grantee share and how the program determined that amount.

***Keep in mind that full-time AmeriCorps program costs include expenditures for the AmeriCorps living allowance, health care and criminal history checks. Education Award Programs are not required to pay living allowances or cover health care for members but must conduct criminal history checks.*

| Selection Criteria | Not Responsive Information missing | Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information | Responsive Needs little additional information | Total Score |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| BUDGET ADEQUACY | 0 | 6 | 12 | |

BUDGET ADEQUACY

The narrative identifies the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.

The narrative indicates non-CNCS resource commitments (cash and in-kind) that have been obtained to date and the sources of these funds

When considering the above information, reviewers will assess the quality of the application based on the following factors:

- *The extent to which the budget is clear.*
- *The extent to which the budget includes sufficient resources to carry out the program effectively.*
- *The extent to which the program will obtain financial and in-kind resources to support program implementation.*
- *Whether an applicant adequately budgeted for its required share of costs.*

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Evaluation Summary or Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 points)

If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the *first time* the program must submit an evaluation plan.

If the applicant is recompeting for a *subsequent time*, the program must submit their evaluation report for review as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period.

Evaluation plans must include the following:

- A description of the intervention or program to be implemented by members. The description must include a theory of change and a clear statement of the outcomes anticipated.
- A description of the program evaluation design including research questions, research methodology and the outcomes that will be measured.
- A description of the data collection procedures including the types and sources of data, the population or sample, and a data analysis plan. The organization's data management system should be addressed if it will be used to collect data for the evaluation.
- A description of how the evaluation results, both interim and final, will be used.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of your grant, as described in 45 CFR § 2522.710:

- If you are a State and/or National Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and your average annual CNCS program grant is *\$500,000 or more*, you must arrange for an external evaluation of your program, and you must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If you are a State and/or National Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is *less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee*, you must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of your program, and you must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK

| The performance measures this applicant proposes: | | YES | NO |
|---|--|-----|----|
| | are National Performance Measures. | | |
| | align with the application narrative. | | |
| | align with the logic model submitted by the applicant. | | |
| | has targets that are reasonable - not too low and/or not too high for the # of AC members requested. | | |
| | align logically, i.e., the results of interventions provided by AC members should, in fact, result in what the applicant proposes as an outcome? | | |
| | | | |
| The measurement tools this applicant proposes: | | | |
| | adequately measure results | | |
| | need to be strengthened | | |